



BATMAN



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NO. 224

15¢

BATMAN



54403

CLOUDS CLUSTER IN A SLATE-GREY SKY LIKE ANCIENT MOURNERS... A FINGER OF WIND FOXES SHARPLY FROM THE RIVER...AND RAIN FALLS WITH A SAD WHISPER ON NEW ORLEANS...



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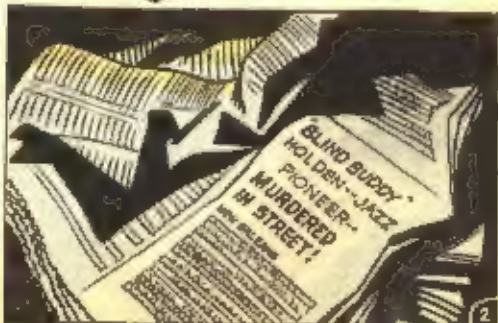
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A MISSION
OF MERCY--
AND
VENGEANCE--
TAKE THE
DREADED

BATMAN

TO THE LOVELY AND
HISTORIC CITY ON THE
BANKS OF THE
MISSISSIPPI, BIRTH-
PLACE OF JAZZ,
AND SETTING FOR ONE
OF THE MOST BIZARRE
STRUGGLES OF HIS
CAREER... A DEATH-
DUEL WITH A LIVING
FIEND AT THE --

CARNIVAL of the CURSED



FENNY O'NEIL--WRITER
IRV NOVICK &--ARTISTS
DICK GIORDANO
JULIE SCHWARTZ--EDITOR

YOU DON'T SEE THEM MUCH ANYMORE, NOT EVEN IN NEW ORLEANS... THE OLD-FASHIONED JAZZ FUNERALS... BUT NO OTHER KIND WOULD BE RIGHT FOR CHARLES "BLIND BUDDY" HOLDEN... LAST--AND GREATEST-- OF THE HORN-MEN...



...BECAUSE NEW ORLEANS JAZZ IS AN HONEST MUSIC, A JOYOUS SOUND THAT CELEBRATES LIFE WHILE NEVER FORGETTING DEATH! SO THESE MUSICIANS TRUDGE THROUGH THE CITY'S HISTORIC FRENCH QUARTER, WEEPING OPENLY...



...THERE AREN'T MANY TRADITIONAL JAZZMEN LEFT, AND THAT IS A SHAME...IT'S SAD THAT A MAN'S LEGEND CAN DIE BEFORE HIS BODY DOES...



SUDDENLY, FROM A DARKENED DOORWAY...



OUTTA THE WAY, POPS!

WE'RE JOVIN' THIS HERE PLANTIN' PARTY!

PERHAPS! CRAWL BACK TO YOUR HOLE--



SUDDENLY, A DARK SHAPE HURLS FROM A NEARBY BALCONY--AND FELS THE RUSHTY CRIME-FIGHTER...







WE GONNA JUST STAND
HERE WHILE THE BATMAN
DOES ALL THE FIGHTIN'?

COME
ON!



HE'S
RUNNIN'--!

YEAH...RUNNIN'
TO AN PLACE,
EXCEPT A
BLANK WALL!

WE
GOT
'EM!

THEN, EFFORTLESSLY, THE
CREATURE MOLTCH LEAPS TO
A BALCONY... A FULL TWENTY
FEET ABOVE THE GROUND...



--FOLLOWED A BARE MOMENT
LATER, BY THE STEEL-MUSCLED
BATMAN...

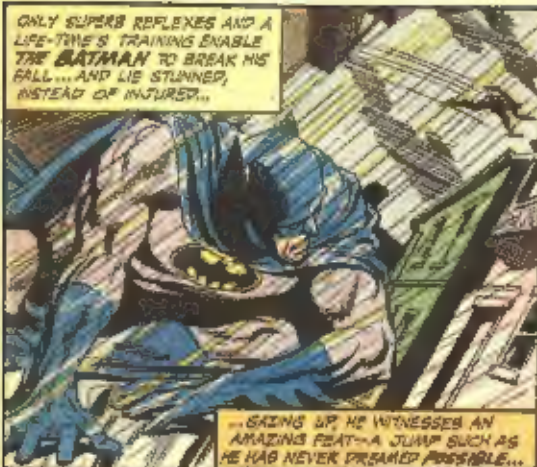


BUT, BEFORE THE CAPED
CRUSADER CAN GAIN AN
ADVANTAGE...



CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

ONLY SUPERB REFLEXES AND A
LIFE-TIME'S TRAINING ENABLE
THE BATMAN TO BREAK HIS
FALL... AND LIE STUNNED,
INSTEAD OF INJURED...



...SAVING UP, HE WITNESSES AN
AMAZING FEAT--A JUMP SUCH AS
HE HAS NEVER DREAMED POSSIBLE...

QUICK... SOMEONE
CALL THE
POLICE! I'LL...



PLEASE! RECALL
THAT WE MUST
SEE OUR FRIEND
BLIND BUDDY TO
HIS FINAL RESTING
PLACE!



YOU'RE RIGHT,
REVEREND! AND,
I'M SORRY!

JAZZ IS DEERANT MUSIC...IT INSISTS THAT YOU'VE GOT TO BE HAPPY
BECAUSE SOME DAY YOU WILL HAVE TO DIE...



...AND SO BLIND BUDDY'S HORN SOUNDS
ACROSS THE GRAVEYARD, SINGS, SINGS--
"THIS BLACK MAN IS STILL NOW, BUT
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, BECAUSE WHEN HE
WAS ALIVE, HE **LIVED!**"



AND THEN, AS IS ONLY PROPER,
THE HORN, TOO, IS LAID TO REST.

THAT WAS NICE
PLAYING. ALMOST
WORTHY OF
BLIND BUDDY
HIMSELF!

THANKS,
BUT THERE'S
NOBODY COULD
COME CLOSE
TO HIM! I
OUGHT TO
KNOW... I WAS
HIS BEST
FRIEND FOR
SIXTY YEARS!

IF YOU DON'T MIND ME
ASKIN'... WHAT'S YOUR
INTEREST?

I HAVE ALL
BLIND BUDDY'S
OLD 78-RPM
RECORDS...

THEY'VE GIVEN
ME MANY HOURS
OF PLEASURE!

I READ HE WAS
MURDERED... AND I
FOUR I OWE HIM
SOMETHING!

SO YOU GOIN' AFTER HIS
KILLER? I'M PLEASED TO
KNOW THAT! WHY DON'T
YOU COME WITH ME TO
RESERVATION HALL--?

THAT'S WHERE A
BUNCH OF US OLD-
TIMERS HANG OUT!

BY THE WAY,
MY NAME'S MAXWELL
DELL... CALL ME
MAX!

MUSICIAN AND CRIME-FIGHTER
WALK TOGETHER THROUGH THE
MURMURING STREETS OF THE
FRENCH QUARTER, TO A
QUANT, DILAPIDATED STRUCTURE

...AND ARRIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ARGUMENT...

I TELL YOU, I
AM NOT
MAKIN' ANY
PEALS,
MUSTER!

I'LL GIVE YOU A THOUSAND
DOLLARS FOR BLIND
BUDDY'S GOODS... A
THOUSAND--!

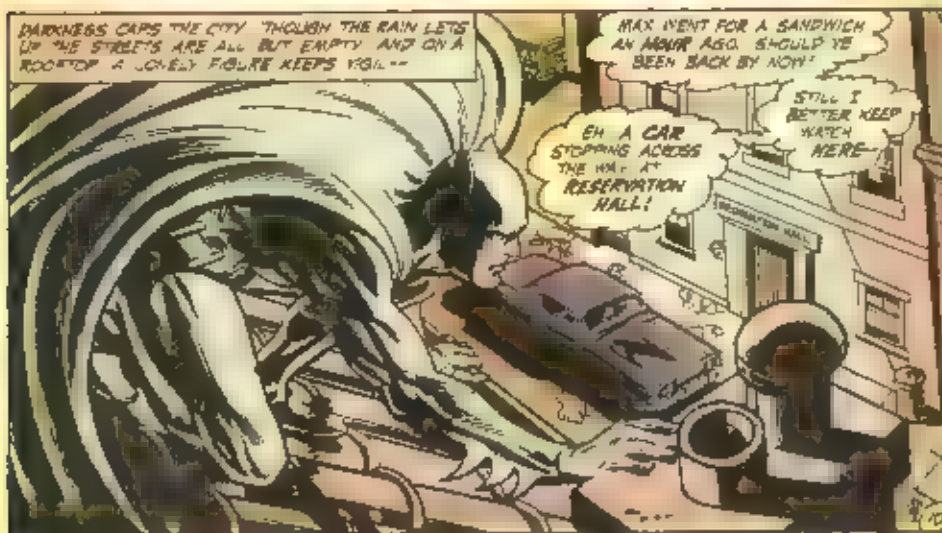
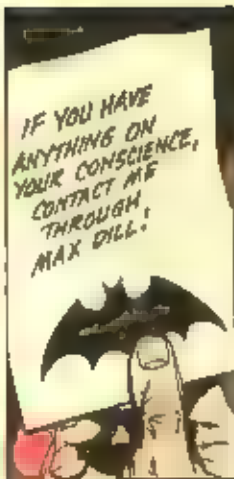
MORE THAN YOUR
KIND MAKES IN
A YEAR!

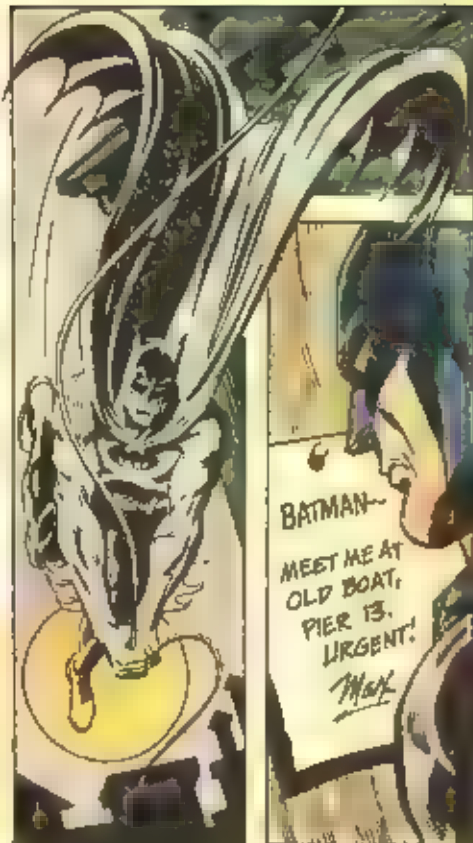
WHAT'S THE
HASSLE?

THIS DUDE WANTS TO BUY
BLIND BUDDY'S STUFF! WELL,
WE'RE NOT
SELLIN'!

WHY NOT? YOU
SOLD ME ROSE
BURTON'S GOODS
READILY ENOUGH!







BATMAN--
MEET ME AT
OLD BOAT,
PIER 13.
URGENT!

Max

THEY MUST HAVE CAPTURED
MAX AND ARE USING
HIM TO BAIT A TRAP!

"TRAP OR NO I'VE
GOT TO GO. FOR
MAX'S SAKE!"

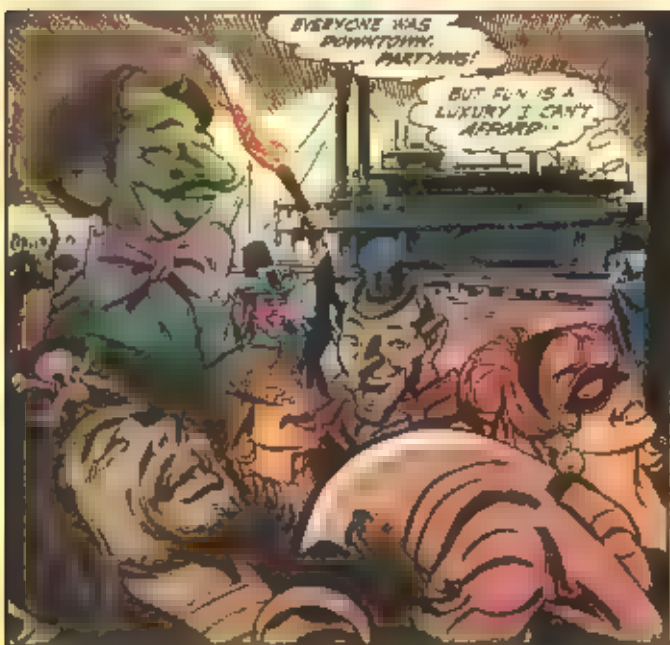
BUT I
DON'T
HAVE TO
GO THE WAY
THEY
EXPECT
ME TO!

AND SO AS THE CITY'S CLOCKS CHIME ELEVEN.

AN OLD STERN-
WHEELER, I
DIDN'T KNOW
THERE WERE
ANY LEFT!

DANGER
KEEP
OFF

THAT
KEEL'S 150
YEARS OLD
IF IT'S A
DAY--



WITH SWIFT STROKES AND
SILENT STROKES THE
BATMAN BREAKS THE
PIERCE RAIN-SHOWER
CURRENT OF THE MURDER-
MURDER--OUT INTO THE
CHANNEL AND THEN AROUND...



AND IN THE
CRAFT'S
SALOON, ONCE
THE SITE OF
LAVISH BALLS
AND MERRY
FLIRTATIONS...

YA KNOW THE
OLDS WHAT BUILT
THIS TUB KNEW
HOW TO LIVE!

AIN'T IT THE TRUTH!
MAN THIS IS REAL
CLASS!

ENJOY IT WHILE
YOU CAN,
PUNKS!

THE
BATMAN
AGAIN--!

WE'VE MET BEFORE
AT A CERTAIN FUNERAL
PROCESSION!



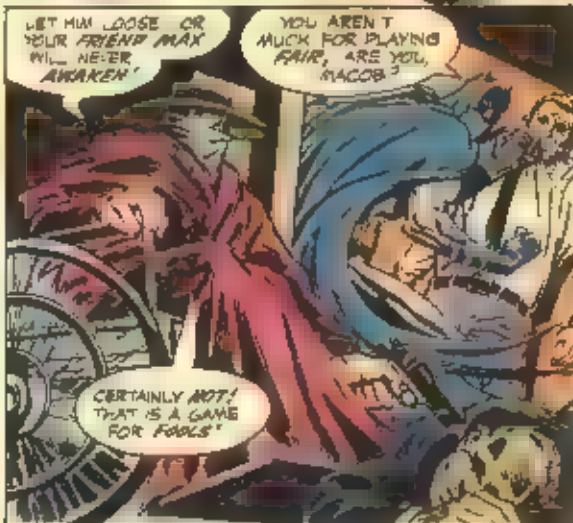
THEN YOU WERE
MASKED. AND
AFTER SEEING
YOUR FACE- I
CAN'T BLAME
YOU!



YOUR
TURN
HARRY!

YOU'LL GET
EXACTLY WHAT YOU
DESERVE UNLESS
YOU TELL ME WHERE
YOUR BOSS IS

RIGHT
HERE
BATMAN!



LET HIM LOOSE OR
YOUR FRIEND MAX
WILL NEVER
AWAKEN!

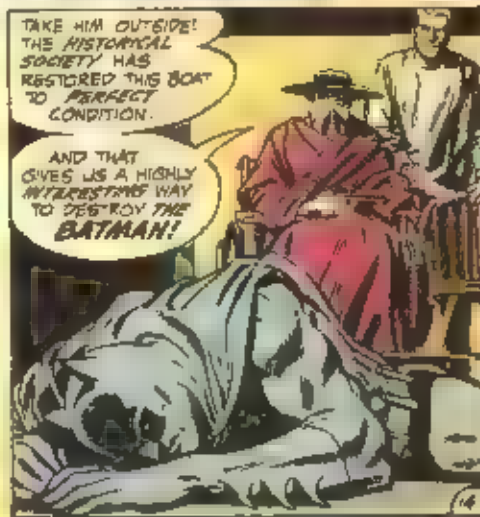
YOU AREN'T
MUCH FOR PLAYING
FAIR, ARE YOU,
MACOB?

CERTAINLY NOT!
THAT IS A GAME
FOR FOOLS!



HARRY?

WITH
PLEASURE,
BOSS.



TAKE HIM OUTSIDE!
THE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY HAS
RESTORED THIS BOAT
TO PERFECT
CONDITION.

AND THAT
GIVES US A HIGHLY
INTERESTING WAY
TO DESTROY THE
BATMAN!

AN ETERNITY OF AGONY LATER, THE MAN FROM
BOTHAM OPENS HIS EYES

YOU ARE
CONSCIOUS! GOOD! YOU CAN
APPRECIATE THE AMUSING
END I HAVE DEVISED
FOR YOU

HARRY HAS
STOKED THE
BOAT'S ENGINE!
WHEN HE RELEASES
THE BRAKE THE
WHEEL WILL BEGIN
TO TURN--

- TAKING YOU INTO
THE RIVER BUT YOU
WILL UNDOUBTEDLY
DROWN BEFORE
YOU REACH IT

COME HARRY,
AND FAREWELL,
BATMAN!

A MINUTE PASSES. HUGE BOILERS HISS
LIKE DEMONS AND THEN

AGAIN AND AGAIN HE IS PLUNGED INTO THE CHILL
FILTHY WATER

EACH TIME I HIT IT
KNOCKS THE WIND OUT
OF ME I CAN'T
KEEP HOLDING
MY BREATH

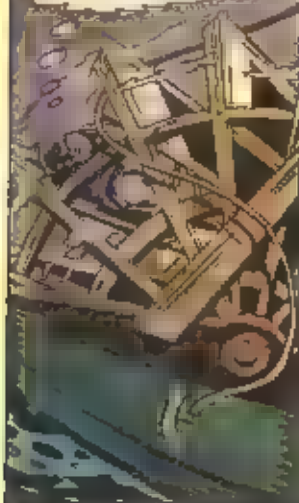
NO
CHANCE
NONE!

WAIT! MAYBE
THERE IS A CHANCE.
THAT LOOSE CABLE
GOT TO GRAB IT IN
MY TEEN NEXT
TRIP AROUND

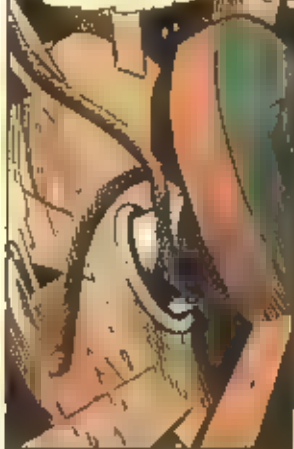
ROPE'S ARE
UNBREAKABLE!
I'M GOING
UNDER--

GOT IT!
I HAVE ONLY
A SECOND

IF I CAN SNAP MY HEAD
SHARPLY, TESS THE CABLE
FAR ENOUGH

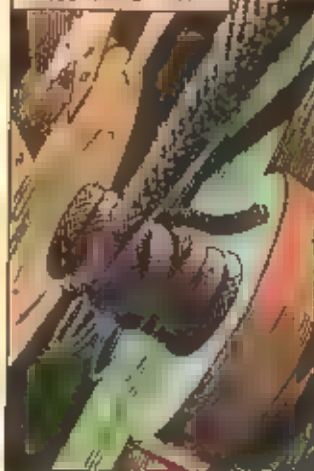


SO FAR SO GOOD!
NOW IT'S A MATTER
OF LUCK!



THE THICK LINE RATTLES
AROUND THE WHEEL'S AXLE...

CATCHES AND, AS THE MOOLE-
WHEEL CHURNS, WINDS TIGHT,
AND TIGHTER STEEL! METAL
SCRAPES METAL! THE STEEL
CABLE BINDS FIRM.

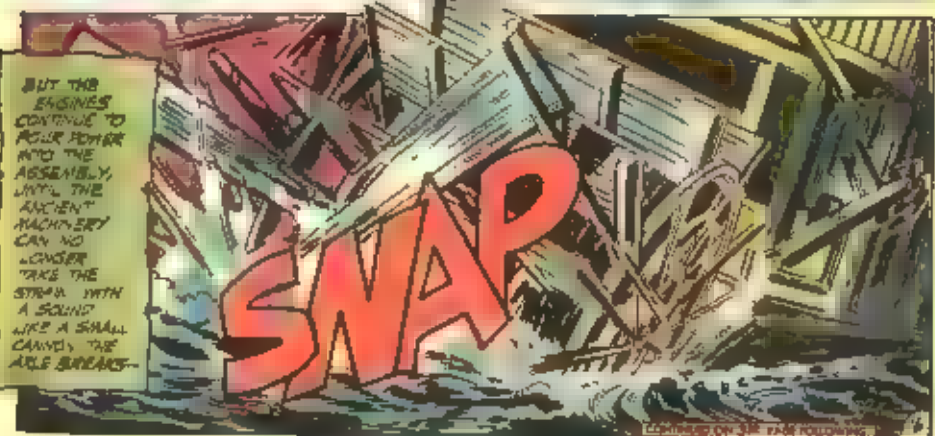


AND FINALLY THE WHEEL
STARTS--WITH THE BATMAN
FACE DOWN IN THE MISSISSIPPI--!



BUT THE
ENGINES
CONTINUE TO
POUR POWER
INTO THE
ASSEMBLY,
UNTIL THE
ANCIENT
MACHINERY
CAN NO
LONGER
TAKE THE
STRAIN. WITH
A SOUND
LIKE A SMALL
CANON, THE
AXLE BREAKS--

SNAP



LETTERS to the BATCAVE



S-469

Dear Editor

This is not a letter to congratulate you on the way you've collaborated with our writers and artists in bringing *Batman* back to the heights of mystery and suspense that was his in the 40's when men called him "The Batman!" Instead of a personal "Batman" No, this is not the purpose of this letter.

This letter is also not to tell you about how you've brought Bruce Wayne, the MAN, more into the spotlight. It generally made me sit up here reading with the absence of costumed villains. No sir.

This letter is to ask whether or not you're going to change the title of your letter column. LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE is a grand tradition but, does it fit?

CHRISTOPHER JERRECH, Burlingame, Ca.

Dear Editor

Well, everything concerning *Batman* seems to have changed. However there is still one thing that needs to be changed: the title of the letter column. LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE is inappropriate since *Batman* isn't using his *Batcave* anymore. A new title hopefully selected by the readers, is needed.

—ROGER SHUOLCRAFT, Fullerton, W. Va.

Dear Editor

As there is no longer a *Batcave*, methinks the letter column needs a new name. BAT-SIGNALS, maybe?

PETER C PHILLIPS, Lance, En

(Three representative letters of the many asking for a switch in titles to this department. Do we go with something new, or do we stay wedded to the old? Readers—pro and con us. Editor.)

Dear Editor

Describing "This Murder Has Been Pre-Recorded" in *Batman* #220 would be nearly impossible. You had a firm plot, four strong leading characters, sensational art, a minimum of messy details, and in short, a believable story. The change in *Batman* has come off remarkably well.

—SCOTT GIBSON, Sterling, Colo.

(Short—and to the point. The next critic takes longer to get to the same point. Editor.)

Dear Editor

Batman #220 was superb, with Frank Robbins coming through with his best script yet. Looking at the splash panel, I doubted *Batman* could possibly be back, not with introducing Miss Maria Manning was a nice touch. I hope she does indeed come back!

Bruce Wayne was perfect in his role, assembling the clues for *Batman* to work with. As *Batman* is and always will be an escapee Nelson form, it is *Batman* we should escape with.

Starting with a murder mystery, author Robbins led

the "Ace of Detectives" to uncover one clue after another. It was a good idea to make the villain a realist. When *Batman* drove to the airport, was sure that this was his method of escape. But he was it was employed was even more masterful. The ending was the only bad point, a bit schmalzy.

The art was MAGNIFICENT! The Norick-Gordano team has gone from fair to fantastic. Although the overall art was terrific, the panel that impressed me most was the first one on page seven. You have a winning team.

Oh, yes, the cover. Very good. That's Neal Adams all the time. It reminded me of Indurino's work.

—MARK LeTOURNEAU, Oni AFB, Mary
(Neal Adams' cover on *Batman* 220 may have reminded you of Indurino's work because our editorial director—across, please our esteemed editorial director laid out a rough sketch of the cover for Neal to work his remarkably skills upon.—Editor)

Dear Editor

Revising *Batman* #220. Good job. The new cover is starting, to say the least. As a matter of fact, I'm not entirely sure I like it better than the old one. At worst, it's gaudy and reminiscent of the overblown camp craze (now wisely buried), and at best, it's just plain too big to do much with—or should I say, do much around. Oh well, the inside was a lot better anyway. Frank Robbins' story was quite excellent, except for one spot we shall comment upon in the next paragraph. The best part was being introduced to yet another woman in *Batman*'s life. Maria Manning. No romance, please, but I would like to see her appear again. After all, she does have something in common with our *Gotham Gazette*, being a crime-exposed journalist. Besides, Irv Novick's artistic rendition of Miss Manning made her appear quite a sexy dame. Kudos!

Now, to get back to the story, the only mar to be found was the fact that we STILL have *Batman* characters as stand-ins for the supposedly fatal deaths. Perhaps hypnosis is the only answer, but please. Oh, by the way, make Mr. Robbins forget his there even could be such hints as *Batman* characters. It's been overdone, used too much, and just plain worn out.

—STEVE BEERY, Alma, Mich.

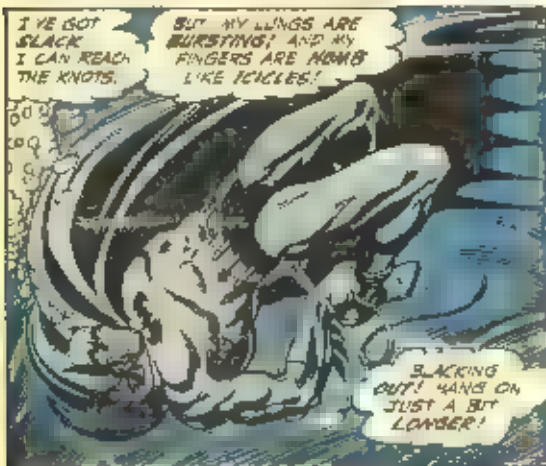
(Okay, no more dum-dum characters! Editor.)

Dear Editor

"This Murder Has Been Pre-Recorded" was certainly a head step backwards to the glorious golden years of the *Batman*. (Although, maybe, his wife #220 be sure. Frank Robbins wrote the tale and as everyone knows, when it comes to the *Gotham Gazette*, Mr. Robbins is a world-beater. The Novick-Gordano team's efforts in portraying the dreaded and



THE PADDLE
TEAR LOOSE
AND THE
CAPTIVE SLIDES
FREE



I'VE GOT
SLACK
I CAN REACH
THE KNOTS.

BUT MY LUNGS ARE
BURSTING! AND MY
FINGERS ARE NUMB
LIKE ICICLES!

SLACKING
OUT! HANG ON
JUST A BIT
LONGER!



THEY

NEVER THOUGHT
PLAIN AIR COULD
TASTE SO GOOD!



CAN I SIT
AROUND
CONGRATULATING
MYSELF, GOT
TO FIND MAX!

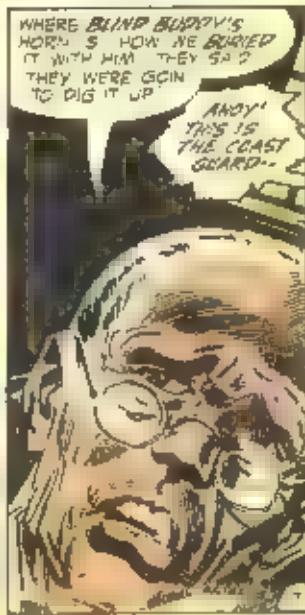


AND IN THE SALON, HE DOES

TAKE IT EASY,
OLD TIMER
YOU CAN
HAVE TO
TALK

I WANT TO--
THEY MADE
ME TELL
MADE ME

TELL
WHAT?



WHERE BLIND BUDDY'S
HORN'S HOW HE BURIED
IT WITH HIM THEY SAID
THEY WERE GOIN
TO DIG IT UP

ANDY!
THIS IS
THE COAST
GUARD--

ANYBODY
ABOARD
THERE?

STEP LIVELY,
MEN BOARD
HER--

AND MAY
I ASK WHY,
FREDRICKS?

CAUSE
CAUSE I
GOL DA
SNORE I
JUST SEEN
A GIANT..
BAT!

SIR I 'SPECTFULLY
ASK TO BE
EXCUSED FROM
DUTY

DEEP INTO THE WAKING
HOURS OF THE NIGHT THE
REVELERS CONTINUE THEIR
CELEBRATION OF THE
HAPPY GRAS..





"NO... NOT
THE BATMAN!
YOU'RE DEAD!
-- DROWNED"



"HARRY WON'T GET
FAR. I'VE NOTIFIED
THE NEW ORLEANS
POLICE OF HIS
PRESENCE HERE."

"HONOR WILL
YOU
ESCAPE
RUFUS
MACOBI"

"YOU BELIEVE NOT?
PERHAPS RUFUS MACOBI
IS A HELPLESS
CRIPPLE"



"BUT MOLOCH IS
MORE THAN A
BATMAN'S EQUAL."



"THOUGH I WAS BORN THIRSTED -
A FREAK--! THOUGH MEN FEAR
ME AND WOMEN SOCKEN
AT MY SIGHT--"

"I AM
POISONER!"



A MOMENT OF
HESITATION... THEN
MOLOCH GIVES
IN TO PANIC!
HE SNATCHES
UP HIS PRIZE
AND BOUNDS
ACROSS THE WET
EARTH...



HIS INCREDIBLE LIMBS PROPEL
HIM OVER A HIGH FENCE...



...AND INTO THE MIDST OF A LAUGHING, STUMBLING, BRIGHTLY
CLAP CROWD...



OOOPS!--
SORRY,
CHUM!

HEY, THAT IS
SOME OUTFIT!

I THINK HE'S
CUTE! GIVE
US A LITTLE
KISS...

FAHLS!
--STAND
ASIDE! I MUST
ESCAPE!



MOLOCH JUMPS... BUT HIS INJURED FOOT PREVENTS HIM FROM CLEARING THE FLOAT! AND WHILE HE WAS DELAYED, HIS NEMESIS HAS REACHED THE SCENE...



LIKE A PRODIGY RURY, THE BATMAN PLUNGES FROM HIS PERCH--



--AND IN THE NEXT EMBLE INSTANT, MOLOCH FALLS STUNNED AND HELPLESS! AN UNSPOKEN VOW IS MADE TRUE... THE MURDER OF A MUSICIAN IS AVENGED!



THIS, IT ENDS AT... MARDY GRAS, A FESTIVAL OF REJOICING...

MARDY GRAS... A TIME WHEN MEN OF RELIGION JOKE AND SING... BEFORE BEGGING THE ALMIGHTY FOR FORGIVENESS...



FOR THE DAY AFTER **HARRY**
GRAS IS **ASH WEDNESDAY**, THE
 BEGINNING OF **LENT**, THE **FORTY**
 DAYS OF **FASTING** AND **PENANCE**.
 THIS **ASH WEDNESDAY** DAWNS
 COLD AND RAINY... THE **FLAT**
 LIGHT OF THE **BREAKING DAY**
 GLINTS HARSHLY ON A **BATTERED**
 BIT OF **METAL**...



...**BATTERED** ALMOST **BEYOND**
RECOGNITION, **TRAMPLED**
 AND **SCRAPED** BY **HUNDREDS**
 OF **FEET**...



WHATEVER MESSAGE IT MAY
HAVE BORNE, LOST-FOREVER?



CHALLENGES OF THE UNKNOWN

ON SALE JUNE 24

MORE

FOR YOUR

MONEY...

...AND

BETTER

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS

ON SALE JUNE 24